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ABSTRACT

The Stanley Foundation annually assembles a panel of experts from the public and private sectors to assess specific foreign policy issues and to recommend future directions. The round-table discussion summarized in this report focused on the future of Africa and the changing global context of U.S. policy toward Africa. While the Cold War has ended, in Africa there is little understanding of what that change in policy means for Africa, for the United States, and for policies toward Africa. The group generally agreed that the United States and the Soviet Union must play a greater role in providing assistance and support for reconstruction in the Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. It was also agreed, however, that in economic terms the superpowers have never been the dominant force in Africa, that Europe as a whole has always contributed more in development assistance to Africa than has the United States, and that as a result of trends over that past decade, the U.S. is becoming an even less influential force in Africa. The report also includes the keynote address by Richard H. Stanley, in which the conferees were asked to consider two underlying issues in their deliberations: (1) the changing national power relationships, including the relative erosion of U.S. power; and (2) the profound global systemic changes that are rendering old policy assumptions obsolete. (NL)

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Global Change and Africa: Implications for US Policy

30th Strategy for Peace, US Foreign Policy Conference 1989

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The Stanley Foundation

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About the Conference

Strategy for Peace, the Stanley Foundation's US foreign policy conference, annually assembles a panel of experts from the public and private sectors to assess specific foreign policy issues and to recommend future direction.

At the October 1989 conference, sixty-nine foreign policy professionals met at Airlie House Conference Center to recommend elements of a strategy for peace in the following areas:

1. Debt and Democracy in Latin America
2. Soviet Economic Reform: Socialism and Property
3. Crisis in China: Prospects for US Policy
4. Global Change and Africa: Implications for US Policy

The work of the conference was carried out in four concurrent round-table discussions. These sessions were informal and off the record. The rapporteurs tried to convey the conclusions of the discussions and the areas of consensus and disagreement. This is the report of one discussion group.

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The chair and rapporteur prepared this report following the conference. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Global Change and Africa: Implications for US Policy

Report of the Thirtieth Strategy for Peace, US Foreign Policy Conference

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Africa Discussion Group

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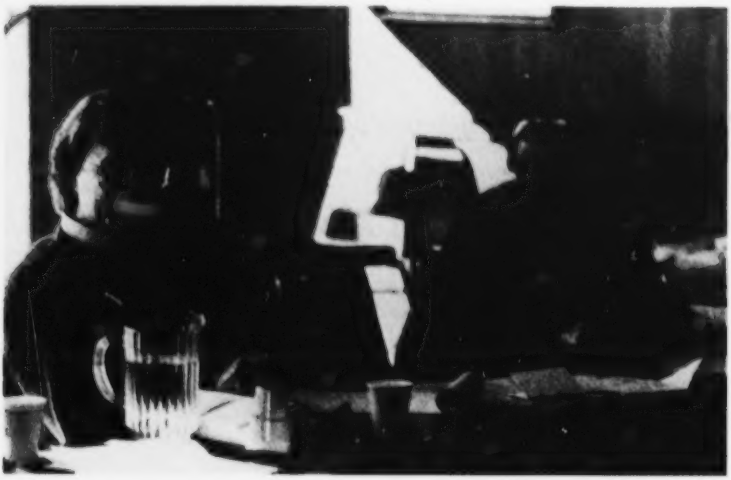
Chair Michael Clough and Rapporteur Michelle Bassin



Global Change and Africa: Implications for US Policy

Since the dawn of the postindependence era in the early 1960s, Africa has been pushed and pulled by the tides of the Cold War. While influence of European powers, especially France, survived the demise of colonialism, the axes on charts used to plot the flow of African events shifted dramatically. The challenges facing African leaders—the range of options open to them, the resources available to pursue different strategies, and the risks involved in doing so—as well as the issues confronting the major powers came to be defined in terms of simple dichotomies: East vs. West, socialist vs. capitalist, Moscow vs. Washington.

From 1957 (when Ghana gained its independence and the Eisenhower administration recognized the need for a policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa) until the mid-1980s, US policymakers heeded one overriding prescription: Prevent Africa from falling under the sway of the Soviet Union. Throughout this period, no matter how much lofty language about development and democracy they were shrouded in, debates about Africa centered over strategies and tactics—how best to counter Soviet influence—not means; and the amount of official attention and resources devoted to the continent was determined almost entirely by perceptions of the nature and extent of the Soviet threat there. In the early sixties and mid-seventies when the threat seemed great, Africa was a concern of presidents and secretaries of State; at other times, when the threat seemed small and remote, Africa was left to the Africanists.

Sometime, somehow, in the years 1985-88, the unexpected happened: The Cold War ended in Africa—and with it the usefulness of the ideological and strategic compasses that had been standard issue to the officials and opinion leaders who had served as foot-soldiers in its many campaigns and battles. Everyone concerned with the future of Africa is now presented with the challenge of developing new ways of understanding the continent and new means of addressing its problems. Toward those ends a small but diverse group of experts from the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union gathered at Airlie House on October 19-21 to discuss the changing global context of US policy toward Africa. This

report is based on the discussions that took place over those three days.

The End of the Cold War in Africa

The Cold War has ended in Africa; and there is little prospect of its revival. On these points most of the participants agreed. What is not so clear, however, is what the end of the Cold War will mean for Africa—or for US and other policies toward Africa. To answer these questions requires an understanding of what the Cold War meant for Africa in the first place and why it came to an end.

Frozen metaphors aside, the Cold War was a bipolar competition for strategic and ideological hegemony between two militarily predominant superpowers, one of whom was also the world's preeminent economic power. The end of the Cold War involves more than just an end to US-Soviet competition in Africa and other parts of the Third World. It entails a transformation in the structural relationships underlying that competition. More concretely, it marks a decline in the ability of Washington and Moscow to shape and color events in Africa; and it signals the growing importance for Africa of other international actors. In short, changes are occurring in both the nature of US-Soviet interactions in Africa and the weight of those interactions in the African equation.

In traditional military terms, the United States and the Soviet Union are still the world's only superpowers. But that now seems to matter less than it once did—especially in Africa. This is largely the result of a recognition of the limited utility of military power. Through experience on terrain as varied in natural and socio-political terms as the rice paddies of Vietnam, the mountains of Afghanistan, and the bush in Angola, US and Soviet leaders have learned how difficult and costly it can be to attempt to convert military might into lasting geopolitical victories in the Third World. In Africa, moreover, it is a paradoxical fact that most countries that have received large amounts of military assistance over lengthy periods of time—e.g., Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan—are among the least secure on the continent. For Africa at least, Mao is thus in need of amending: It is the semblance of power but the reality of insecurity that flows from the barrel of a gun. This realization has altered the superpowers' thinking about military commitments in Africa.

There was agreement at Airlie House that in the short term, neither Washington nor Moscow is likely to eliminate its military

presence entirely. But the nature and significance of those presences are already much changed. New commitments of arms and advisors seem out of the question. Existing commitments are being steadily reduced. And, most significantly, neither power seems more than perfunctorily concerned with the "threat" represented by the lingering involvements of the other.

The end of the ideological Cold War in Africa has been even more sudden and dramatic. The division of states into rival ideological groupings—one espousing socialism and nonalignment with an Eastern tilt and the other embracing capitalism and alignment with the West—was never very firmly rooted in African soil. These were, nonetheless, the terms in which many African leaders chose to represent themselves and their policies in international fora; it was in these terms that US and Soviet officials chose to calculate gains and losses on the continent and distribute largesse. But ideological appeals have now lost their currency.

Pretensions to building socialism or promoting capitalism have been punctured by the increasingly evident sameness of reality on both sides of the rhetorical divide. Whether "socialist," "capitalist," or "nationalist," what most observers found when they surveyed the results of three decades of ideological competition were countries having authoritarian, sometimes brutal, one-party regimes; faltering economies overburdened by bloated and inefficient state sectors; huge external debts; and disastrous agricultural policies. By the mid-1980s neither the East nor the West could point with pride to a single clear-cut model of success for its ideological project in Africa; and, with the ascent of Gorbachev and the seachanges that are now breaking in Eastern Europe, the very idea of socialism as an alternative path of development is in doubt.

Prospects for Constructive Collaboration

Signs of an end to the Cold War in Africa quickly gave hope that the superpowers might join together to address some of the continent's most pressing problems. Optimism about prospects for a new era of constructive collaboration was heightened in late 1988 by the success of negotiations to bring about Namibian independence and Cuban withdrawal from Angola. For the first time in the post-World War II period, US and Soviet officials cooperated in an open and nonantagonistic manner to resolve a bitter political conflict. If the superpowers could work together to end the Namibian conflict, many observers reasoned, why couldn't they work together to resolve other African conflicts, or solve the debt

crisis, or protect the African environment, and so on? Most of the participants were skeptical of this reasoning.

Without the stimulus of strategic and ideological competition, it is far from certain that either the United States or the Soviet Union will be inclined to retain anything more than a token presence in Africa, much less commit the human and material resources that would be required to cure the myriad ills that afflict Africa. In the Horn of Africa, for example, neither Moscow nor Washington has indicated a willingness to do anything more than quietly urge the parties to the various conflicts in the region to go to the bargaining table, while holding out the possibility that they might simply cut their ties with the warring parties.

In citing the Namibian example as a prescriptive model for US-Soviet cooperation, several points are usually overlooked. First, had it not been for concerns in the mid-1970s about growing Soviet influence in southern Africa, the United States would probably not have taken the lead in efforts to promote Namibian independence. Second, in cooperating to settle the Namibian issue, both Moscow and Washington were acting in ways that will eventually reduce their commitments in the region. Finally, it should not be forgotten that a settlement was possible first and foremost because of circumstances and developments over which the two superpowers had, at best, limited control. As several participants noted, the real turning point in the Angola-Namibia negotiations came on the battlefields of southern Angola as a result of military actions independently taken (and not taken) by Cuba and South Africa.

The group generally felt that the most that can be expected in the way of US-Soviet cooperation in Africa is a series of mutually self-denying understandings. For example, both powers seem to have abandoned the propoganda war whereby each sought to blame the other for most of Africa's troubles. They also seem to have already agreed, implicitly if not explicitly, to avoid actions that might lead to confrontations. If they would go a step further and agree to eliminate arms transfers to the continent, it would help to limit the damage done by bloody-minded politicians. None of these actions—nor any others that the erstwhile superpowers might take—will end conflict in Africa, but they do represent change in the right direction.

One area where most of the conference participants felt the United States and the Soviet Union ought to be urged to play a

significant role is in providing humanitarian assistance and support for reconstruction in the Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. The depth of human suffering in these war-torn countries is beyond the ability of most of us to apprehend. The combined toll of dead, maimed, and brutalized numbers in the millions. Although spawned by local grievances and power struggles, the wars in these countries were fueled and fanned with arms and rationales proffered by the superpowers' minions. It should not be acceptable, therefore, for US and Soviet officials to declare the Cold War over and go home. As the wars in these countries wind down, each in its own way, at its own pace, there will be a tremendous need for large-scale rehabilitation efforts—and neither Moscow nor Washington should be allowed to forget their obligation to support such an effort with more than hollow words and surplus goods.

In fields other than conflict resolution and rehabilitation, it makes little sense to expect joint action by the United States and the Soviet Union to yield significant results. With regard to the environment, medicine, population, and most of the other important nonsecurity issues in Africa, the superpowers' superpowerdom never had much significance. Other combinations of countries and institutions provide much more relevant and useful bases for international cooperation on such issues, for reasons discussed below.

The Changing Face of External Involvement in Africa

In economic terms the superpowers, especially the Soviet Union, have never been the dominant force in Africa. The United States has never been the major trading partner of more than a handful of African countries; and if trade in oil is excluded, that number shrinks to almost zero. Most African countries, especially the Francophone ones, have remained closely linked economically with their former metropoles. This is even more true with regard to direct investment than it is with trade. Moreover, Europe as a whole has always contributed far more in development assistance to Africa than has the United States.

As a result of trends over the past decade, the United States is becoming an even less influential economic force in Africa. For example, according to 1987 figures the United States ranked fifth on the list of major aid donors to SubSahara Africa—behind France, the World Bank, Italy, and Germany. It has now also been surpassed by Japan.

The most important external economic forces in Africa are now the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In the past these institutions were perceived as extensions of the United States. While such perceptions linger on in Africa, the reality is that both institutions have developed a considerable degree of autonomy. The end of the United States' hegemonic position in the world economy has brought a significant dimunition in its ability to control international institutions.

The two currently unfolding international developments that could have the greatest impact on Africa over the next decade are the uniting of Europe and the emergence of a more independent, internationally minded Japan. The uniting of Europe is a very mixed blessing for Africa. On the positive side, the emergence of a single European market could offer a big boost to African countries that are able to develop manufacturing export industries, as long as the preferential access that Africa receives under current agreements between the European Community and the African, Carribbean, and Pacific countries are not eliminated. On the negative side, however, a single European market may only serve to highlight the relatively marginal economic significance of European trade and investment in Africa. Moreover, the sudden changes in Eastern Europe have created a demand for economic assistance as well as possibilities for foreign investment that will almost certainly reduce the levels of resources available for Africa.

On a bilateral basis, European interest in Africa seems to be flagging. For many years the one given in assessments of foreign involvement in Africa was that the French were on the continent to stay. But this is changing. A mood of "Afropessimism" has fallen on France. The Franc zone is no longer as profitable an arrangement as it once was. French investment in Francophone Africa has declined by 25 percent, and it is expected to decline even further. And of the other countries in Europe, only Italy seems to be increasing its presence in Africa.

Japan's emergence as an international economic power could prove more positive for Africa. The Japanese government has already announced its intention to make $60 billion in economic assistance available to the continent; and some participants speculated that Japanese investors might seek to use Africa as a base from which to penetrate the new European market. But considerable uncertainty surrounds the Japanese role in Africa.

Japan does not appear to have an Africa policy per se. It has increased its aid in large part because of urgings from the United States and others. But the Japanese do not seem to have either a deep understanding of the continent or a clear sense of where it fits in with their overall foreign policy. Part of the problem is that Japan lacks any real expertise or experience with Africa. In the short run at least, the Japanese are likely to follow the lead of the IMF and the World Bank.

In short, Africa is becoming less and less the economic preserve of any country or group of countries and more and more the responsibility of multilateral institutions. Any future efforts to address African problems will have to take this new reality into account.

The Many Dimensions of the African Crisis

There was consensus among the conference participants that Africa is in a state of crisis with many aspects. Among the most critical of the problems facing the continent are:

- A governance crisis that has led to the collapse of effective institutions in a host of countries.
- A security crisis that has spawned civil wars in at least seven countries.
- An AIDS crisis that threatens to decimate a whole generation of Africans.
- A debt crisis out of which many countries seem to have little hope of ever escaping without wholesale debt cancellations.
- An environmental crisis that is gobbling up the continent's useable resources of land and wood at a spiraling rate.

One of the participants at Airlie House suggested that it was best to think in terms of "two Africas." On the one hand, there are those countries such as Niger and the Central African Republic where it is not realistic to expect significant economic growth or development. For these countries the main challenge will be surviving. On the other hand, there are countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe that could, with the right leadership, policies, and assistance, experience at least modest takeoffs. The first group of countries are destined to remain dependent on the international community for the foreseeable future, the second are not.

A Basis for Hope

The end of the Cold War and the growing international marginalization of Africa almost certainly means that Africa will receive less

future assistance in dollar terms. Pleas for new "Marshall Plans" for Africa are almost certain to fall on deaf ears. Nevertheless the situation is not entirely bleak.

The dismal experiences of the past three decades have caused many observers, African and non-African, to question whether more external assistance is the answer regardless of what the question is. An old slogan—"African solutions to African problems"—is gaining new currency. Whether it be in the security field or in the economic field, a consensus appears to be forming that Africans must face up to the fact that most of their problems are home-grown—and, as the superpowers and others pull back, Africans will be forced to find ways of addressing those problems that do not depend on large inflows of foreign assistance.

In these regards, almost everyone at this conference agreed that Africa's future hinges in large part on (1) the emergence of a stable middle class capable of providing managerial and entrepeneurial leadership and (2) the establishment of representative and responsive governmental structures. Without these two things it is difficult to envision the development of productive societies. The policies of the major external powers should therefore be targeted at strengthening nongovernmental sectors in African societies and encouraging African governments to pursue policies that will allow those sectors to thrive.

President's Address

by Richard H. Stanley
President, The Stanley Foundation

Richard Stanley opened the Strategy for Peace Conference with the following remarks, addressing all participants from the four topic groups.

For the past thirty years this conference series has been dedicated to the development of US policy. This year is no different. However, we all know that the context of policy formulation, whether direct as in the case of our group on China, or indirect as with our group on Soviet economic reform, has altered significantly as the world and our relative position in it have changed fundamentally over the past three decades. This simple observation prompts me to ask you to consider in your deliberations two larger, underlying issues that will define the context for US policy: first, the changing national power relationships including the relative erosion of US power since our immediate post-World War II period of dominance; and second, the profound global systemic changes that are rendering old policy assumptions and formulas obsolete.

Let me elaborate. First, with regard to the relative decline of US power, I think the facts are clear while interpretations may vary. For example, we are all well aware that in the space of a few years the United States has gone from being the world's largest creditor nation to being the world's largest debtor nation as we continue to import capital to offset our decline in world markets. Our trade and budget deficits exceed $100 billion annually which is also a relatively new phenomenon, at least in terms of the size of the deficits. In another area of national power we remain the world's preeminent military power, but we are finding that military strength, a continuing necessity for the present and foreseeable future, has brought on obligations and problems that outstrip our means, a dilemma Paul Kennedy has labeled "imperial overstretch." Additionally, we, as well as the Soviets, have learned hard lessons about the limits of military power. We have finally realized that the absolute power of strategic weapons makes their use unthinkable. The two superpowers are like hulking giants who dare not unleash their might, thus rendering these massive arsenals nearly impotent in terms of enforcing political decisions.

Both have learned hard lessons about the limitations of superior conventional forces in Viet Nam and Afghanistan respectively and are now beginning to understand the Pandora effect of conventional weapons proliferation in the Third World.

These economic and military trends have been a blast of cold reality and have caused some to make alarmist predictions about the decline of US power and the disaster awaiting the US economy. Others have chosen to deny the trends, relying instead on nationalist sentiment and a retrenchment of old policies from the glory days of US dominance. Before following either path, or any in between, I hope we will first be willing to make a sober assessment of the degree and nature of decline and how it relates to a broader global adjustment toward a more multipolar world.

Second, and just as obvious as the altered status of US dominance, is the fundamental change occurring in the nature of the world. This change is evident in the form of globalization of both problems and systems. For example, the economic system has been internationalized as nonstate economic actors such as transnational corporations and major financial institutions have grown in size and power. This change has greatly curtailed the ability of national governments to independently manage their own economic futures.

The environment illustrates the globalization of a problem. The global dimensions of this issue have only recently surfaced. Thirty years ago we knew little about pollution and treated it as a local problem. Today the environmental crisis threatens the very ecosystem that sustains life on this planet. Clearly, the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, ocean pollution, deforestation, and desertification are among several examples of truly global and basic problems that defy traditional state-oriented solutions.

While our conference topics were never intended to be related in any way, they are all linked by these overriding issues that I believe will help form the basic context for the formulation of US policy.

Our discussion on "Global Change and Africa: Implications for US Policy" acknowledges the need to deal with these issues in its

title as well as in its objectives. Fundamental changes in the international system have significantly altered the context within which US policy toward Africa will be formulated and implemented. This discussion group will build on the growing awareness of these developments and of their impact in Africa in an effort to develop guidelines for effective multilateral initiatives there.

The group examining "Soviet Economic Reform: Socialism and Property" will seek to go straight to the heart of the Soviet effort to respond to its own decline in power and its effort to continue as a great power through economic and political reform. The Soviets must attempt these efforts in an evolving international context. They have been our major rival and the motivation for much of our foreign policy for some forty years. They will continue to be of major concern for the foreseeable future, but the importance of the rivalry is declining. The Soviets are clearly in a less advantageous position than the United States to meet these new challenges. However, you can be sure that the success or failure of their efforts will have significant implications for US policy.

Those of you here to investigate the relationship between "Debt and Democracy in Latin America" are no doubt well aware of the interplay of state and nonstate economic actors in this region. It is my belief that Latin America will be of profound importance to the future of US political-economic policy. This region, that has seen so many years of US domination, will no doubt hold many lessons for the United States as we adapt to new political and economic relationships.

Finally, the discussion group on the "Crisis in China: Prospects for US Policy" offers a fascinating opportunity to examine our own response to the situation in China as well as to the actual events taking place there now. Are economic sanctions and political threats effective or desirable methods in face of the recent aberrant behavior of the Chinese government? What is the appropriate role for the US, and what are its duties and obligations? How effective can we be? Do we need to develop new methods to achieve our objectives?

I should say at this point that I am not trying to paint a particularly negative picture of the future, but I believe change is underway and its continuation is inevitable. Therefore, my plea to you is

to look to the future and to the new global realities as you develop policy criteria. Perhaps Paul Kennedy sums up all this best in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, in the following passages:

> The task facing American statesmen over the next decades, therefore, is to recognize that broad trends are underway, and there is a need to "manage" affairs so that the relative erosion of the United States' position takes place slowly and smoothly, and is not accelerated by policies which bring merely short-term advantage but longer-term disadvantage. ...
>
> In all of the discussions about the erosion of American leadership, it needs to be repeated again and again that the decline referred to is relative not absolute, and is therefore perfectly natural; and that the only serious threat to the real interest of the United States can come from a failure to adjust sensibly to the newer world order.

Having laid out these challenges and having asked that you give them some consideration, I feel obligated to share with you some early thoughts on how we might respond. First, I think that we are looking for ways to proceed and not for grand theories or solutions to impose. Simply put, I think the best approach would be process-oriented.

One of the more immediate responses I would recommend is elimination of the increasingly false dichotomy separating foreign and domestic policy. Can we any longer have a domestic environmental policy and a foreign version? Surely the debt problem in Latin America has domestic implications. Iowa farmers are well aware of the domestic impact that Soviet economic and agricultural reforms can produce. Drug policy is another example of the blurring of foreign and domestic issues. And with the growing public interest and formation of politically active groups concerned with China, domestic implications will soon be felt.

The joining of foreign and domestic policy is closely related to a second pressing need: better coordination of national policy. All too often foreign nations get one word from Treasury and another from State. We have different national agendas that only serve to send mixed signals and exacerbate problems. What are the priorities of our policy toward Latin America? It depends on

whom you talk to—the banks want their money and the State Department wants democracy. I don't believe these issues are antithetical, but the prospects for both might be improved through better coordination of policy. It almost goes without saying that greater consideration must be given to multilateral options in meeting the problems and challenges that lie ahead. As I have already noted, by their very nature, the internationalization of the economy and the planetary threats to the environment defy any unilateral or bilateral attempt at resolution. Add to this the growing level of poverty, overpopulation, international health problems, as well as nontraditional threats to security like terrorism and drugs, and the need for greater consideration of multilateral alternatives is mandatory. It is time to build the international institutions needed to assist in meeting these problems.

Perhaps the most difficult and profound adjustment is the rethinking of our view of ourselves in the world. I recently chaired an international conference on the environment. During discussion of sustainable development, a concept of development that is environmentally sound and regenerating, one of our participants from a developing country stated bluntly that sustainable development will not be possible until the people of the developed world enter into a solidarity pact with the people of developing countries that acknowledges that all our lives are equally important. I do not mean to sound some simplistic call for us to raise our level of consciousness to do right and be good. Rather, I want to underscore the fact that we have yet to learn to think of ourselves as part of a global system. We have not acknowledged or internalized our interdependence with the people or the planet. The United States is a great nation that has proven time and again its resourcefulness, its intelligence, and its courage to meet new challenges—we must now add maturity and wisdom to meet the challenges ahead.

I look forward with great anticipation to your stimulating discussions. I trust that they will prove productive and creative and that together we may make a modest contribution toward a secure peace with freedom and justice.

The Stanley Foundation

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Other Publications

US Policy in the Persian Gulf: New Beginnings. Participants focused on new developments in the region in an effort to formulate goals and strategies for US policy. April 1989, 16pp.

Indochina Policy Recommendations for the Next Administration. The product of a year of discussion and debate by the Indochina Policy Forum, a bipartisan group of experts on Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. October 1988, 20pp.

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